



Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Agency Employee Recognition Plans

Introduction

State government has thousands of dedicated employees *Making a Difference for Delaware* every day. Recognition of their contributions affects how employees feel about their work, their commitment to state and agency goals, and the quality of services provided to the citizens of Delaware. *Making a Difference for Delaware* is a campaign to recognize and reward the dedication, talents, and contributions of state employees.

Agency managers have a responsibility to ensure that frequent, appropriate, and effective recognition is an integral part of agency operations. Each agency should promote employee recognition by developing initiatives to focus attention on the contributions of employees while fostering pride in state service and promoting excellence and commitment in achieving departmental goals.

These initiatives should provide a variety of opportunities to recognize as many deserving employees as possible and highlight the accomplishments of those who have demonstrated exemplary performance.

Although an awards program provides a framework for employee recognition, agencies must also work to create a culture of commitment and excellence. This includes fostering and maintaining a sense of organizational identity, high standards of performance, continuous improvement, and pride in effort and accomplishment.

Recognition is an integral part of good management and should be incorporated into management training and into accountabilities for managers and supervisors.

Recognition Initiatives

Each department should encourage the development of creative, frequent, and effective ways to recognize the contributions of employees. Everything from kudos or a thank-you, to department-level formal awards should be encouraged. A department's overall recognition activities should be designed so that all employees are eligible to receive some form of recognition. Praise and appreciation should be shared regularly and spontaneously, whenever opportunities arrive.

Departments should consider the availability of recognition and awards from private groups and organizations. Civic groups, professional organizations, non-profit agencies and others often provide recognition for those involved in their activities.

Recognition initiatives and fundraising, should not be confused with initiatives and funds raised for other purposes such as the State Employee Charitable Campaign or “Sunshine Clubs” (where funds are used to purchase items such as birthday cards, flowers to show sympathy, etc.). All initiatives and fundraising should directly relate to recognizing employees as outlined in the Agency’s Recognition Plan.

Award Expenditures

Agencies are authorized to spend up to \$10.00 per employee per year on recognition events including gifts, space rental, and food. Although no additional funding has been provided, agencies may use available funding appropriate for employee recognition. Agencies may also purchase certificate paper, certificate frames, and plaques for Employee of the Quarter, Employee of the Year, and other awards included in approved agency recognition plans. Recommended price ranges for plaques and frames will be forwarded to agency recognition coordinators.

Agencies may also conduct goods for service type fundraising activities such as bake sales, fish fries, ice cream socials, silent auctions, etc. to support recognition events. Raffles are not permitted. So as not to interfere with the State Employees’ Charitable Campaign, recognition fund raisers are limited to November through August.

There is no cap on the amount of funds an agency may raise, however, agencies should avoid saving large amounts of funds and rolling them over to a new fiscal year. The purpose of this program is to spend money on deserving employees. Agencies should anticipate the amount they expect to spend each year, and when fundraising has yielded that amount, fundraising should end. Agencies should plan to spend the full amount raised each year.

Tracking Expenditures

All expenditures should be coded in the First State Financials system.

Some exceptions will be made to the use of FSF. For example, if an agency is currently using petty cash for recognition funds, they may continue this practice.

If using FSF:

- NSF funds should be used – these are non-appropriated special funds which are funds received from receipts such as donations, gifts, etc. and can be fully expended. The appropriation for employee recognition is 20428

If using an outside account:

- Obtain approval to use a State EIN and use one of the State’s approved banks (refer to the Budget and Accounting Manual)
- Do NOT keep cash in an employee’s office or other unsecured or unmonitored locations, even if locked up.

Agency Recognition Plans

Each department shall develop a written plan, including any division plans, for approval by the Department of Human Resources. The plan should include a clear statement of agency commitment to recognition and accountabilities to ensure that supervisors and managers are carrying out their responsibilities.

Plans should include a description of:

- Recognition Event(s) planned for the agency and its divisions/sections, if applicable.
- Total estimated budget for all events and system for tracking funds.
- Types of non-monetary awards employees are eligible to receive.
- Award nomination criteria, procedures, and selection process.
- Click here to review a [sample recognition plan](#).

Agency Awards

Departments are encouraged to develop formal department-level award programs (e.g., Employee of the Quarter or Year, Distinguished Service Award, etc.). In setting up and maintaining an awards program, departments shall:

- Designate a recognition coordinator to coordinate the development of the agency recognition plan and promote employee recognition activities. The coordinator is responsible for understanding the mission and goals of the agency, providing vision and guidance to managers, and generating enthusiasm and support from managers as well as from employees in general. The coordinator serves as the key contact person for employees within the department and the liaison between the department and the Department of Human Resources.
- Establish an awards selection committee, if the size of the department permits. The selection committee should be diverse and representative of the department and should include employees from a variety of classifications and pay grade ranges. Committee membership should rotate regularly and consideration should be given to all sections.
- Develop selection criteria and define the nomination process. Nominations should be encouraged from any employee, for any employee, with each nomination reviewed and verified by agency management to ensure the accurateness and appropriateness of the nomination. If the size and make up of the department warrants, division-level or facility awards can also be established and can serve as a first step in selecting those who will then become eligible for the department award.
- Publicize and promote the awards program and award recipients to the fullest extent possible, making use of newsletters, agency websites, bulletin boards, etc.
- Ensure that all employees are eligible and that no particular employee or group is favored over another. Equal opportunity to be nominated for and receive awards should be provided to all employees.

Considerations

Recognition coordinators should make efforts to communicate recognition plan information to employees at all levels within the agency and should:

- Solicit input from all levels of employees in the design of recognition initiatives.
- Provide instruction for supervisors in how to provide positive, effective recognition for employees.
- Assure agency-wide publication/promotion of all recognition activities.
- Provide a method for sections to report their activities.

Submission of Recognition Plans

When updates are made, either to an agency's plan, or to the recognition guidelines, agencies shall submit updated recognition plans electronically to the Department of Human Resources, Statewide Recognition Coordinator. The purpose of the approval process is to assure consistency among plans, provide technical assistance, and to share information among departments.

For more information contact:

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